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Gov. Schwarzenegger signs high-speed rail bill

Reversing his pledge not to sign any legislation until the Legislature agrees on a budget, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger on Tuesday signed a bill to change the high-speed rail measure on the November ballot.

AB 3034 replaces Proposition 1 with Proposition 1A, which will give all high-speed rail corridors an equal opportunity to compete for a share of the \$9 billion bond the bill would provide. Proposition 1A would also devote \$950 million to improvements in rail services that connect to the high-speed corridor, such as the Capitol Corridor.

“Assembly member Cathleen Galgiani's tenaciousness and skill kept AB 3034 alive, to the benefit of every Californian. And Governor Schwarzenegger's leadership has ensured that unprecedented economic safeguards will guide the construction of a vitally needed transportation alternative,” Judge Quentin Kopp, chairman of the High Speed Rail Authority, said in a news release.

Kopp said AB 3034 will improve the high-speed train bond language with important taxpayer protections and cost controls.

“The California High-Speed Rail Authority has worked diligently to present the voters with the best, most responsible improvement to our antiquated transportation systems in California,” he said. “Building a high-speed train in California will cost two to three times less than expanding freeways and airports to accommodate millions of new Californians by 2030.”

Schwarzenegger previously said he would not sign any legislation until a budget was passed, noting that some important legislation would be missed but passing a budget was the state's priority.

The deadline to get the high-speed rail and other items on the November ballot is looming, though an exact date is up to the Legislature to determine.

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